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## SPECTACOLO DI LORENZO DE MEDICI

A UNIQUE FÊTE GIVEN BY THE ARTISTS' CLUB OF DENVER

BY ELISABETH SPALDING

THE Artists' Club of Denver has for years given each winter a unique and beautiful social evening at some private house for its members, now numbering about five hundred. One year Japanese prints were selected and given in tableaux, illustrating different periods, and rendered with carefully painted backgrounds and flat lighting, a Public Library story-teller giving explanatory legends while scenes were shifted.

Another year there were reproductions of Rembrandt, and these, too, were done in living pictures, giving, as accurately as possible, the right lighting and color, illustrating the different periods of his life and with talks between pictures of Rembrandt, the man, the artist, the dreamer. A Whistler evening, too, was very beautifully rendered, and with the

help of much gauze and painting, was unusually artistic and faithful in appreciative interpretation.

Tanagra Figurines were given another year and were very lovely; form and line and suggestions of color being achieved with the help of soft dyes and clinging stuffs and plaster of Paris. This year, as one of the largest and most beautiful of Denver residences, that of Mrs. Walter Scott Cheesman, was placed at the disposal of the club, the one most fitting thing seemed to be an elaborate costume affair. The time of Lorenzo de Medici was chosen, Florence the place, and the discovery of a rare Greek statue the occasion, for the celebration.

The idea was to reproduce a gorgeous spectacle such as Lorenzo was wont to give to the citizens of Florence.

It was, at first, not thought possible that so beautiful a conception could be carried out in Denver, that rich enough fabrics and lovely enough color and a brilliant enough setting could be found here for such an occasion, but it was decided to try it, and the evening proved a triumphant success.

All members of the Club were invited to come in costumes of Florence of the fifteenth century, while some fifty were carefully selected and costumed to represent prominent personages of that day. Several artists made color schemes and tracings from valuable costume books, lending them to be copied, and the Public Library put on a special shelf books bearing on the subject. A special committee collected a loan exhibition of photographs and color prints of Florence and of the works of the greatest artists of that century and hung them in the Art Gallery at the Public Library, so that all could prepare for the evening and enter into its beauty understandingly.

Many came in costume and these stood in groups about the rooms as Florentine citizens. A prologue made clear the intent of the performance, which was the clever work of Mrs. J. J. B. Benedict, the wife of the architect, welding together characteristic poems, songs, speeches and dances. With a fanfare announcing the start, there then began the playing on stringed instruments of old Italian music and, with slow dignity, the procession moved down the broad winding stairway. Two little pages in fur-bordered tunics and rose-colored tights and velvet caps preceded Lorenzo, the Magnificent, in his rich purple mantle and heavily embroidered tunic. Following, came the Court Chamberlain, his heir, Piero and Alfonsina, his wife, his young son, the Cardinal Giovanni, Madonna Laura Strozzi, Politian, court poet, Pica de Mirandola, the architect, and the artists, Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, Sansovino Piero de Cosimo Albertinelli and the young Michelangelo. Then came all the Ladies in Waiting, and the Dancers of the Pavane and of the Classic Dance, and then the Proconsul and Heads of the Seven Major Guilds, the

Guild of Wool, of Merchants, of Judges and Notaries, of Bankers and Money-Changers, of Silk and Goldsmiths, of Doctors and Apothecaries, of Furriers and Skinners. Each Guild had its banner with its special color and device borne before them by the pages when presented to Lorenzo.

This stately procession wound its way, in time with the quaint music, through the spacious hall and rooms to the end of the long drawing-room where Lorenzo was enthroned, surrounded by his Court. It was, indeed, a brilliant spectacle, and the performance was delightfully carried out. The dancers introduced by the fanfare recalled vividly the beauty of Botticelli's Spring, as they cast garlands of flowers about the unveiled statue of Apollo.

Politian read a poem in its honor and songs were sung and speeches made, as all paid homage to Beauty and to Art.

Savonarola appeared suddenly on the scene warningly calling upon Florence to give up this pagan worship, and to see a new fair city, glorious in fame with thoughts of past glories turned to civic righteousness. He urges them to throw the new-found statue and all pagan baubles upon the pyre, the pyre of vanity, but, as he disappears, Lorenzo cries, "It is not true, I disappear and he will disappear. Florence may even crumble into dust, while Art lives on and that small statue there will be the master of more worlds than priests can scan. I thank you, gentlemen, and will move on, but Art moves with us." The cortège moved out. The guilds first, courtiers, scholars, and last, Lorenzo and pages.

The brief annual meeting which followed was happily carried on in the spirit of the entertainment, the officers being in costume and the opening address being fully in character, repeating the words of Madonna Alfonsina uttered but a few minutes before, "More art, more art, until we breathe it in the air, and speak it as we pass, and love it, too!"

In the dining-room was the long serving board with ladies of rank in rich costumes sitting behind its damask cloth

covered with splendid arrangements of fruits and silver dishes. The colored waiters were Blacks in the Moorish white burnoose and turban.

As a result of this delightful evening, it is the hope of the Artists' Club of Denver that something of the lavish ap-

preciation and the extravagant love for art, and the generous expenditure of time and talents and of gold for all that was beautiful that marked those Renaissance days, may inspire men and women of this day—that we may indeed have art, more art!

## SOME PORTRAITS AND OTHER PAINTINGS

SHOWN IN THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN'S EIGHTY-NINTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION

HELD IN THE FINE ARTS GALLERIES, NEW YORK,

March 21 to April 26, 1914



PORTRAIT

DOUGLAS VOLK